

So you are the Sadducees!

Key information to read and discuss:

Sadducees - another prominent group of Jews in Palestine from 2nd century BCE through 1st century CE; they were probably smaller "elite" group, but even more influential than the Pharisees; they followed the laws of the Hebrew Bible (the Torah), but rejected newer traditions.

- "Sadducees" comes from the Hebrew *tsaddiqim* ("righteous ones"), which may refer to the way they wished to live their lives.
- The name may also derive from Zadok, the high priest under King David (1 Kings 1:26), since many Sadducees were priests.
- Long-time political and religious rivals of the Pharisees, although their influence was more with the wealthy ruling elites.
- Probably also rivals of the Herodians, since they had supported the Hasmonean Jewish rulers against King Herod.
- Closely associated with the Jerusalem Temple and with the ruling council ("Sanhedrin") of the Jews (Acts 4:1; 5:17; 23:6).
- Did not believe in life after death (Mark 12:18-27; Luke 20:27) or in angels or spirits (Acts 23:8).
- NT Gospels portray them (often together with the Pharisees) mainly as opponents of Jesus (Matt 16:1-12; Mark 18:12-27).
- But they also rejected the teachings of the Pharisees, esp. their oral traditions and newer innovations.

From: http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Jewish_Groups.htm

Sadducees.

The name Sadducees most likely comes from the name Zadok, a priest who anointed David's son Solomon as king (see 1 Kings 1:32–40). The descendants of Zadok, the Zadokites, were recognized as the only legitimate priests by Ezekiel (see Ezekiel 44:9–31) and the author of the Book of Chronicles. It's likely that the Sadducees were Zadokites who supported the Hasmonean (descendants of the Maccabees) kings and priests. The Sadducees were apparently of the elite, wealthy class, and were closely allied with the high priestly families. Josephus says the Sadducees had a following among the rich only, while the Pharisees had a greater following among the common people. In the Acts of the Apostles, the Sadducees are associated with the high priest and the Jerusalem Temple (see 4:1–2, 5:17). Josephus names the high priest Ananus as a Sadducee. In New Testament times, the high priest was appointed by King Herod, the client king of the Romans, then by Herod's son Archelaus, and later directly by Roman rulers of Judea. With their connections with the high priestly families, the Sadducees were closely tied to Roman rule in Palestine. Ancient Jews held a variety of different beliefs about the afterlife. Josephus says the Sadducees believed that the soul died along with the body; the Acts of the Apostles reports that "the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection or angels or spirits, while the Pharisees acknowledge all three" (23:8). Members of the Sadducees tried to show that the belief in resurrection was not logical when they asked Jesus about a hypothetical case in which a woman had married seven men. In the life after resurrection, whose wife would she be?

(see Mark 12:18–27). Jesus answered them, “When they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but they are like the angels in heaven” (12:25). In other words, the normal standards of marriage do not apply in the resurrected life. According to Josephus, the Pharisees and Sadducees were often in conflict. The Pharisees taught many religious rules that were not directly in the Torah; the Sadducees rejected all laws that were not The Political and Religious Structure in Jesus’ Time Page | 2 © 2010 by Saint Mary’s Press Living in Christ Series Document #: TX001327 explicitly written in the Torah. Josephus also reports that the Sadducees were harsher in their legal judgments and punishments than were the Pharisees. The rabbinic literature often portrays the Pharisees and Sadducees disagreeing about matters of purity.

From:

https://www.smp.org/dynamicmedia/files/0fd53742db7ecdea61a6b02c15ad6150/TX001327_1-Background-Political_and_Religious_Structure_in_Jesus_Time.pdf

Pharisee / Sadducee alignment:

There was another side to the Pharisees. By bringing Jewish religious life out of the Temple and into homes, synagogues, and the lives of everyday people, as well as advocating the continuing interpretation of the Torah, they helped preserve Jewish tradition after the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70. But they had a big problem with Jesus’ taking on the authority of God-healing people, setting himself up as the interpreter of the law, and forgiving sins.

As did the Sadducees. They saw their role as upholding traditional practices and beliefs, and they resolutely defended worship at the Jerusalem Temple as the action that maintained the covenant between God and Israel. Though they differed with the Pharisees over belief in resurrection, like the Pharisees they vied for influence with the royal court and the Roman rulers and opposed this person Jesus, who challenged just about every religious authority he encountered.

From: <https://uscatholic.org/articles/200908/who-were-the-pharisees-sadducees-scribes-chief-priests-and-elders/>

Questions to discuss:

How can we show in our presentation how much we couldn’t stand the Pharisees, but you did agree with them about that Jesus man, who clearly thought we was capable of much more than he was?

What are some of your key beliefs that set you apart from other Jewish groups?

What’s important to you?

Interesting things your group could highlight:

Highlight appropriate points from your discussion above.

Two stories to demonstrate to the group what you thought about Jesus:

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matt+16%3A1-12%3B+Mark+18%3A12-27&version=NABRE>